



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PROCUREMENT AGENDA ITEM

R-26-106
Meeting 26-18
July 8, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 6

AGENDA ITEM

Partnership Agreement with San Mateo Resource Conservation District for Bluebrush Ranch Carbon Farming Implementation Project

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a Partnership Agreement with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) for the Bluebrush Ranch Carbon Farming Implementation Project at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, with a monetary contribution of \$76,820 to complete installation, maintenance, and monitoring of native plants and fencing.

COMMITTEE

- ☐ Action Plan & Budget
- ☐ Legislative, Funding & Public Affairs
- ☒ Planning & Natural Resources
- ☐ Real Property
- ☐ Ad-Hoc Committee

MEMBERS

- ☐ Ward 1 – Craig Gleason
- ☒ Ward 2 – Yoriko Kishimoto
- ☒ Ward 3 – Jed Cyr
- ☒ Ward 4 – Curt Riffle
- ☐ Ward 5 – Karen Holman
- ☐ Ward 6 – Margaret MacNiven
- ☐ Ward 7 – Zoe Kersteen-Tucker

COMMITTEE ACTION

Date: June 23, 2026

Action: Forward a recommendation to the full Board of Directors to approve a partnership agreement with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District to implement the Bluebrush Ranch Carbon Farming Implementation Project at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.

Item: Bluebrush Ranch Carbon Farming Implementation.

COMMENTS

The Committee received a presentation on the Project from the District project manager and RCD staff. Questions and comments focused on the science of carbon farming, the removal of silvopasture from the project scope, and how carbon efforts could be expanded on District lands.

The Committee asked if the District is on the front edge of carbon farming science and how sequestration will be measured for the project. The project manager and RCD staff explained that the science is well-established, and we are implementing well-tested and understood methods. Carbon sequestration will not be directly measured because reliable estimates can be made using trusted, peer-reviewed models, e.g., COMET, which was developed by the United States Department of Agriculture and Colorado State University.

The Committee asked why silvopasture was removed from the scope, given the tradeoffs between carbon sequestration and the grazing tenant's operation. Staff explained that the agricultural component of the District's coastside mission provided much guidance, with the grazing operation's needs taken into careful consideration. Additionally, silvopasture was not an ideal treatment for Bluebrush due to the small scale of the pilot site. Staff shared that there is a project on the Fiscal Year 2027/28 Capital Improvement and Action Plan to identify appropriate sites for silvopasture, which may focus on ungrazed grasslands.

The Committee asked about how carbon farming efforts could be expanded and about Board involvement in future carbon farming projects and decisions, suggesting that a programmatic approach may be desirable. Staff explained that carbon farming requires site-by-site planning to determine appropriate treatments. For smaller projects, Board review would not be necessary. In addition, some of the District's routine restoration activities, e.g. riparian restoration, are very similar or identical to carbon farming methods and are only lacking the carbon-specific framing.

Finally, during the discussion, a statement was made in error regarding a change in acreage of District grazing land as of the time of acquisition. The following is a statement of correction and clarification: to date, all lands that were actively grazed at the time of acquisition remain in active grazing. Please refer also to Attachment C for details.

No changes to the project scope were recommended. There were no public comments. The committee voted 3-0 to approve the General Manager's Recommendation.

ATTACHMENTS

Committee reports and draft minutes will be attached rather than linked.

- A. June 23, 2026 PNR Report (R-26-88)
- B. June 23, 2026 PNR Draft Minutes
- C. Memo to File: Correction re: District Acreage with Grazing Potential

Prepared by / Contact person:

Sophie Christel, Management Analyst II, Natural Resources Department



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

R-26-88
June 23, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 2

AGENDA ITEM

Partnership Agreement to Enhance Carbon Sequestration and Storage at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Forward a recommendation to the full Board of Directors to approve a partnership agreement with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District to implement the Bluebrush Ranch Carbon Farming Implementation Project at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.

SUMMARY

In 2022, the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) developed a Carbon Farming Plan (Plan) for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (District) Bluebrush Ranch property (Bluebrush) in Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. The Plan describes land management actions for promoting carbon sequestration and storage in soils and vegetation on the property. In 2023, the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) awarded the RCD grant funding for numerous projects, including implementation of the Plan. The RCD proposes to partner with the District to utilize \$43,960 in grant funds for implementing qualifying components of the Plan. The proposed Partnership Agreement would authorize the RCD to implement the Plan on District lands and authorize \$76,820 in matching District funding for project expenses not covered by the WCB grant.

DISCUSSION

The Bluebrush Ranch Carbon Farming Plan Implementation Project (Project) aims to increase carbon sequestration and storage in soils and vegetation at Bluebrush in Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Preserve), by implementing recommendations from the 2022 Plan. The Plan was developed for the District by the RCD and Point Blue Conservation Science in 2022 under the General Manager's spending authority. The Plan describes existing conditions of soil health, plant communities, and carbon storage at Bluebrush and proposes management actions to increase carbon sequestration and storage by stabilizing and/or amending soils, planting perennial vegetation, and restoring the ecological values of certain areas.

In 2023, the RCD secured a grant from the WCB that provides funding through calendar year 2026 for numerous projects, including: implementation of the carbon farm plan, wildlife habitat restoration, pollinator habitat restoration on working lands, and riparian restoration in San Mateo County. The District and RCD staff have identified qualifying actions from the Plan that would utilize \$43,960 of the grant funding:

- Conservation cover plantings: Planting of native perennial grasses and wildflowers to improve forage, establish habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, suppress invasive plant species, stabilize soil on slopes, and promote soil carbon sequestration. These plantings would be installed in an ungrazed area adjacent to the riparian corridor of Purisima Creek, following treatment actions to control invasive vegetation that currently dominates the site (Attachment 1, Site A, ~0.4 acre). This type of treatment typically increases carbon sequestration by 0.5 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (MTCO₂e) per acre, per year.
- Erosion control plantings: Installation of native willow stakes and low-growing, moisture-loving species that can stabilize soils and provide forage for cattle once established. These would be planted in and above an erosional feature that has formed due to surface runoff from the County's Purisima Creek Road (Attachment 1, Site B, ~0.1 acre). This type of treatment typically increases carbon sequestration by 2 MTCO₂e per acre per year.

Total expected carbon sequestration increase for the Project, based on the treatments and acreage, is 0.45 MTCO₂e per year.

This Project is a pilot to explore the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of implementing carbon farming methods on the District's actively-grazed rangelands. Mr. Tom Pacheco, the conservation grazing tenant at Bluebrush, grazes cows and calves in the pasture between Purisima Creek Road and Purisima Creek (includes Site B) in spring and early summer, then moves the livestock elsewhere and grazes bulls on the pasture in late summer and fall. Site A is ungrazed. The Project has been designed in collaboration with the tenant to avoid undesirable impacts on the grazing operation, which has revealed some of the complexities of implementing carbon farming alongside active grazing. The plant palette is limited to species safe for consumption by cattle, including species that offer good forage. Water for irrigation of the plantings must be trucked in, as on-site water is prioritized for the livestock and the District-owned residence on the property. Certain elements originally proposed, including a hedgerow of native shrubs along Purisima Creek Road and silvopasture (sparse planting of trees within rangeland) were eliminated based on feedback from the tenant and the San Mateo County Farm Bureau, who were concerned about the potential loss of grazable area. Trees and shrubs, being woody, are generally more effective at sequestering carbon than herbaceous plants, so their incompatibility with the grazing operation demonstrates another potential challenge for implementing carbon farming alongside active grazing. Approximately 1/10th of an acre in Site B needs to be excluded from grazing for the three-year plant establishment period; however, the Project will allow the opening of a ~0.4-acre area in Site A to livestock grazing, resulting in a net increase in pasture area. The Project is also designed to withstand pressures from grazing, including robust exclusion fencing and plant species that can tolerate both trampling and browsing after establishment.

The following activities would be conducted on District lands as part of the proposed Partnership Agreement with the RCD:

- Site preparation to prepare for plant installation;
- Coordination with nurseries for the grow-out of native plants;
- Native planting installations;
- Installation of browse protection fencing around the erosion control and wetland planting area;

- Annual site monitoring for three years, including documenting conditions and correcting any issues in coordination with the District;
- Coordination with the grazing tenant for targeted grazing in Site A to control invasive species;
- Irrigation of plantings as needed during the dry season for three years following installation; and
- Maintenance of browse protection as needed for three years following installation and its removal if plants are sufficiently established at the end of the three-year period.

The RCD will identify appropriate contractors to install plants and conduct maintenance and monitoring activities in partnership with the District. The RCD and any contractors under RCD supervision would coordinate with the grazing tenant via District staff.

The RCD has obtained a quote from an installation and maintenance contractor who can provide the necessary services and materials for a total of \$88,196. The RCD expects project administration to cost \$17,370 for the Project duration (through calendar year 2029). Capital and labor costs for plant installation and materials are reimbursable by the grant, but maintenance, monitoring, and project administration are not eligible and would be paid for by the District.

The RCD can commit \$43,960 of grant funds for the first-year implementation, including furnishing and supplying nursery plants, labor, erosion control and plant protection materials. The General Manager proposes that the District, as a project partner, contribute up to \$76,820 to leverage the existing RCD grant funding for qualifying activities.

The proposed funding structure for the Project is as follows:

District	
Project administration	\$17,370
Maintenance and monitoring	\$59,449
<i>Total maximum District contribution</i>	<i>\$76,820</i>
RCD (Grant-reimbursed)	
Plant installation labor	\$26,458
Nursery plants and materials	\$17,502
<i>Total RCD/Grant contribution</i>	<i>\$43,960</i>
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$120,779

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed Partnership Agreement would leverage \$43,960 in RCD grant funds to further the District's greenhouse gas reduction goals and enhance the carbon sequestration and storage potential within coastal agricultural lands. In exchange, the District would commit up to \$76,820 in District funding.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

None

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. Notice was also provided to the Natural Resources Management and Coastal, Agricultural, and Purisima Creek Redwoods interested parties lists. Staff hosted a field visit with the San Mateo County Farm Bureau to receive input on the Project during which they voiced concerns about Project elements (i.e., shrub and silvopasture plantings) that would result in a small reduction of grazeable area. Those specific elements were removed from the Project based on Farm Bureau (and tenant) feedback. The Farm Bureau has been notified of this PNR meeting.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR, State Clearing House Number 2013092033) prepared for the Integrated Pest Management Program, which the Board approved on December 10, 2014 ([R-14-148](#), [Minutes](#)), analyzed vegetation management activities including those in the recommended Partnership Agreement.

The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND, State Clearing House Number 2021080129) prepared for the Open Space Maintenance and Restoration Program (OSMRP), which the Board approved on September 22, 2021 ([R-21-126](#), [Minutes](#)), analyzed restoration and maintenance activities including those in the proposed Partnership Agreement. The Project was included in the 2026 OSMRP project notification to permitting agencies.

The Partnership Agreement and subsequent contracted work to complete the vegetation actions will incorporate the associated mitigation measures and BMPs from both the Integrated Pest Management and OSMRP CEQA documents.

NEXT STEPS

If approved by the PNR, this Agreement will be brought to the full Board for their consideration. If authorized by the Board, implementation of the planting plan and subsequent monitoring and reporting would be completed by the RCD and its contractors. Project activities are anticipated to begin in Fall 2026 (Q1 of Fiscal Year 2027).

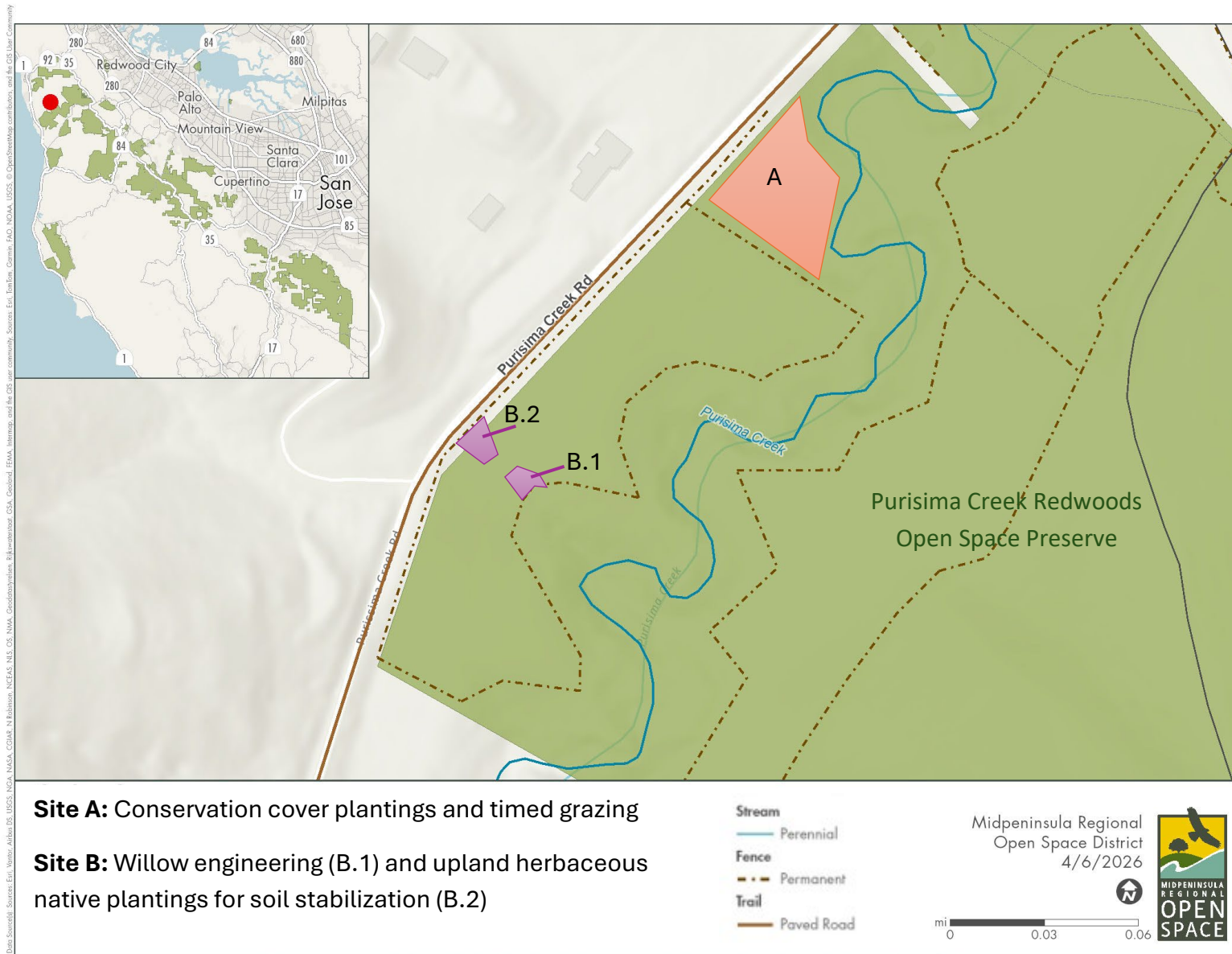
Attachment

1. Site Map

Responsible Department Head:
Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources

Prepared by/contact person:
Sophie Christel, Management Analyst II, Natural Resources

Site map for Bluebrush Carbon Farming Project





Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 23, 2026

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Riffle called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 1:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Jed Cyr, Yoriko Kishimoto, Curt Riffle

Members absent: None

Staff present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Chief Financial Officer Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Shaylynn Nelson, Management Analyst II Sophie Christel, Water Resources Specialist III Jacqueline Van Der Hout

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Deputy District Clerk Shaylynn Nelson reported there were no public speakers for this item.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Approve the April 27, 2026 Planning And Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes

Public comment period opened.

Ms. Nelson reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment period closed.

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Kishimoto seconded the motion to approve the April 27, 2026 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting minutes.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Partnership Agreement to Enhance Carbon Sequestration and Storage at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (R-26-88)

Management Analyst II Sophie Christel and San Mateo Resources Conservation District (RCD) Agricultural Stewardship Project Manager Mia Riddle presented. General Manager Ana Ruiz, RCD Executive Director Kellyx Nelson, and RCD Senior Program Manager and San Mateo County Agricultural Ombudsman Eliza Milio assisted in answering questions.

Director Kishimoto inquired whether it should be a Board policy decision to eliminate silvopasture and hedgerows on the grazing lands due to their impact on grazing operations.

Director Riffle asked for more information on what led staff to make the tradeoff between silvopasture with hedgerows and grazing land.

Ms. Christel explained that staff had consulted with the tenant and Farm Bureau to ensure that the pilot project did not impact the grazing operation in an undesirable way. She noted that the agricultural elements of the coastal mission led staff to prioritize agricultural goals and objectives as part of this project but at other non-agricultural locations, staff could assess whether the silvopasture of hedgerow plantings would be appropriate for a site. She suggested that if the District implements carbon farming elsewhere, it may be best to look at sites that are not actively grazed.

Director Kishimoto expressed that carbon farming should perhaps be built into expectations and suggested it be flagged for the Board.

Ms. Christel explained that the pilot sites were not ideal due to the proximity to the road, the way the tenants feed and water their animals, and the size of the land.

Kellyx Nelson further explained that each site will have specific needs, priorities, opportunities, and constraints and noted that this was a small portion of land that allowed the opportunity to learn from the experience for future projects.

Ms. Ruiz stated that the strategy of silvopasture needs further education and conversations with the agricultural community since there is sensitivity about how grazing areas are managed and avoiding what would be perceived as loss of grassland. She explained that staff needs to first also assess the available opportunities to expand grazing in areas that can sustain it, where there is no active grazing currently. She also noted that there are multiple steps that the District would need pursue to grow support from the community prior to adopting silvopastures as a broader land management strategy.

Ms. Christel noted that staff has a plan for a project in a future fiscal year to look at silvopastures specifically and to identify appropriate areas for the practice.

Chair Riffle inquired what type of decisions the Board of Directors (Board) will need to consider as the project progresses.

Ms. Christel responded that if additional carbon farming projects are presented to the Board, it would be a site-by-site decision making process. She explained there is an upcoming project to

**Planning and Natural Resources Committee
June 23, 2026**

examine silvopasture potential and priority locations need to be identified. She further noted that each project would need to be designed individually since there are different variables.

Chair Riffle explained he is disinclined to have the Board make approvals on a site-by-site basis and expressed a preference for setting up a structure similar to the Integrated Pest Management program.

Ms. Christel explained that another consideration is that many of the actions could be implemented as part of the Open Space Maintenance and Restoration Programs on an annual basis since the practices are routine. She also suggested that if a project comes below the threshold requiring Board approval, then it would not necessarily need to be presented to the Board.

Public comment period opened.

Ms. Nelson reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment period closed.

Director Cyr expressed a preference for keeping the project small during the initial phases to ensure that the District is successful with carbon sequestration.

Director Riffle requested staff to consider how the District will proceed with the project after three years and to also keep the Board apprised of updates through a memo.

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to forward a recommendation to the full Board of Directors to approve a partnership agreement with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District to implement the Bluebrush Ranch Carbon Farming Implementation Project at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

3. Three Coastside Fisheries Improvement and Monitoring Projects: Lobitos Creek and Arroyo Leon Creek Stream Assessments and Conceptual Designs, and San Gregorio Creek Fisheries Monitoring (R-26-89)

Water Resources Specialist III Jacqueline Van Der Hout and RCD Habitat Enhancement Program Director Amy Kaeser presented. RCD Executive Director Kellyx Nelson assisted in answering questions.

Public comment period opened.

Ms. Nelson reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment period closed.

Director Kishimoto requested that staff provide additional information regarding the feasibility study, particularly related to the first level design, when presenting to the full Board.

**Planning and Natural Resources Committee
June 23, 2026**

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to forward a recommendation to the full Board of Directors, with any Committee feedback, to approve partnership agreements with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District for the Lobitos Creek and Arroyo Leon Creek Fish Passage Improvements Feasibility Projects, and the San Gregorio Creek Fisheries Monitoring Project.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Riffle adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee at 2:47 p.m.

Shaylynn Nelson
Deputy District Clerk



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: July 8, 2026

MEMO TO: File and Ana Ruiz, General Manager *den*

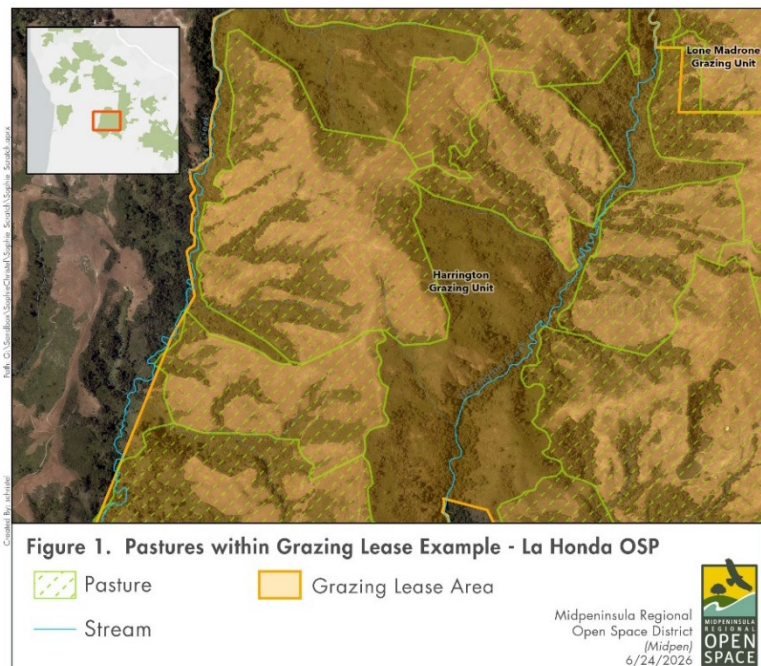
FROM: Sophie Christel *se*

SUBJECT: Correction re: District Acreage with Grazing Potential

This memo is to correct a statement made during the presentation to the Planning and Natural Resources Committee on the Bluebrush Carbon Farming Implementation Project. During the presentation, the project manager stated that approximately 17,000 acres across District lands were either actively grazed or had “grazing potential,” meaning that the properties were grazed at the time of District acquisition but are not currently grazed. This statement was made in error due to a misunderstanding of the underlying GIS data used to support these figures.

The District has acquired properties where grazing occurs (“grazing properties”) totaling 17,092 acres. Of these grazing properties, 15,496 acres are included in grazing leases and 9,162 acres are actively grazed (“pasture”). Infrastructure development on some properties after District acquisition (e.g., fencing, water) has enabled the District to open some pastures to grazing that were not grazed at the time of acquisition. The leased area is larger than the pasture area because the leases include land that is not grazeable, typically due to slope or vegetation type. Figure 1 illustrates this; within the grazing lease, satellite imagery shows areas of riparian corridors that would not support grazing and therefore are excluded from the pasture area.

Similarly, the difference between the grazing property acreage and the grazing lease acreage results from areas of the properties that are not suitable for grazing, either for the reasons stated above or because they lack any recent history of grazing, lack the necessary infrastructure (e.g., fences, water, and roads), present access challenges, or include other land uses such as residences.



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